



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

RECENT SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM *

In spite of the solemn injunction upon that famous slab in the chancel of Stratford Church, men will continue to "dig the dust enclosed here," and some of them raise much dust, nothing but dust, in doing so. But the general tone of recent publications about Shakespeare, both in volumes and in brief articles and reviews, convinces us that the world is growing less sympathetic with the man who ventures upon Shakespearean criticism without adequate information or merely for the sake of making a saleable volume. The public would not endure, for example, another Mrs. Jameson; and text editions for schools, which are the index of popular feeling in the matter, seem to be giving less and less space to mere impressionist criticism, more or less hysterical in manner, with increased attention to the questions of dramatic structure, and with greater frankness in discussing the plays not as sacrosanct but as plays produced by a practical playwright for the Elizabethan stage. The interest in producing a correct text is as keen as ever, but has been taught wise restraint. There is less disposition than formerly to accept conjectural emendations and give them place in the text; indeed, though it is by no means certain we may not yet be able to find correct solutions for some of the corrupt passages that have perplexed us, no such solution has been generally accepted in recent years, and the tendency seems manifestly in favor of an accurate reproduction of the Folio texts as against even the conservative emendations of the Cambridge editors.

*The following books and articles have been considered: *The Shakespearean Stage*, by Victor E. Albright, Ph.D., Columbia University Press, New York, 1909; *Shakespeare and His Critics*, by Charles F. Johnson, Litt.D., Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1909; *Was William Shakespeare a Gentleman?* by Samuel A. Tannenbaum, The Tenny Press, New York, 1909; *The Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars, 1597-1603*, by Charles William Wallace, Ph.D., *University of Nebraska Studies*, 1908; *Newly Discovered Shakespeare Documents*, by the same, 1905 (also in *Englische Studien*, 1905-1906, and *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*); articles by the same in the *London Times*, October 2 and 4, 1909, and in *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1910; *The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Life-Story*, by Frank Harris, Mitchell Kennerly, New York, 1909.

Among the recent volumes which will prove of real help to the student of Shakespeare, I should mention Dr. Albright's *Shakespearean Stage*.

Time was when our knowledge of the stage and stage methods in the days of Shakespeare was so limited that editors of school texts, as well as authors of the more pretentious works upon the subject, were fairly free to indulge their own fancies when they undertook to tell us how one of Shakespeare's plays was staged at the Globe. Strange to say, that fancy, instead of rioting through unchecked profusion of detail, pictured the stage of the time as little more than a bare platform with a more or less unsteadily placed balcony above it, guiltless even of a curtain, with no scenery, no properties except of the meanest, no costumes except of the most incongruous tawdriness. There was no change of the setting to indicate that we had been in the street before Shylock's house in Venice, and were now to be at Belmont to witness the choice of caskets within Portia's home. Some writers, more indulgent to us or to their fancy, would say that placards, marked respectively, "a street in Venice," and "a room at Belmont," were "thrust forth" (like the tub of Diogenes in Lyly's *Campaspe*), and explain that the vivid imagination of the Elizabethan audience pictured the rest.

From such empirical statements the patient study of recent scholars has delivered us. After such volumes as those of Chambers on *The Mediæval Stage* had made it clear that even the miracle plays were presented with scenery and properties by no means scanty, however crude, and after the realization that the Elizabethan drama grew up while miracle plays were still being presented, we could have no warrant for assuming that the patrons of the Theatre, the Fortune, and the Globe, would be content with a stage almost as bare as the cart of Thespis. Within the last few years many excellent books, such as Ordish's *Early London Theatres*, Baker's *Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist*, and Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama*, basing their statements not upon previous books but upon careful investigation of facts, have seriously modified our conceptions.

Dr. Albright's volume is not the least valuable of the

several recent contributions to our knowledge of the subject. The excellence of his method of investigation is the thing that chiefly commends his work; for his study is lacking in thoroughness, in that he has not yet examined all the plays that are preserved, nor has he attempted any research for documentary evidence that might affect the validity of his conclusions. It is but just to say, however, that a complete examination of all the evidence seems rather likely to add to the mass of facts he has accumulated than to affect their essential reliability. Like a sensible man, he studies the conditions known to have existed on the stage of the miracle plays, and on the stage after the Restoration, endeavoring from this and from the evidence in the Elizabethan plays themselves to discover what were the true conditions in Shakespeare's time. And to the consideration of these conditions he brings no preconceived theories, but common sense and a practical knowledge of stagecraft to-day. With the literature of the subject he seems familiar, though hardly attentive enough to the work Professor Wallace is doing, to which we shall allude later. He sifts his evidence with care, rejecting, for example, Van Buchell's drawing of the stage of the Swan, reproduced in many books as typical of Shakespeare's stage, on the well-established ground that "It is a picture drawn on hearsay evidence by a man unacquainted with the art of acting, and, as a result, is impracticable, self-contradictory, and lacks some of the necessary parts" (p. 40).

Much of what Dr. Albright presents to us has, of course, already been made familiar by other scholars, such as Baker, Schelling, and William Archer. But no work that we know is so complete and so painstaking, and none applies with such excellent results the test of present-day stage methods. It is in this respect, in particular, that he excels the careful dissertation of Richard Wegener, *Die Bühneneinrichtung des Shakespeare'schen Theaters*, which he criticises in some detail (appendix, p. 160). In general, Dr. Albright shows from actual pictures and drawings, as well as from other evidence, that the Shakespearean theatre had an outer stage, extending some distance out into the auditory and entered by two proscenium doors; an inner stage, of about the same dimensions, separated from the

outer stage by curtains at the proscenium arch; a gallery or balcony above the inner stage; and a structure called the 'hut,' used for machinery and for scenic devices that can easily be imagined, over the inner stage. Scenes representing a street, a public place, or any location requiring few properties or none, were presented on the outer stage. Scenes representing a room, such as the court in the *Merchant of Venice*, might occupy the inner stage, or the entire stage, so that when the curtains were closed upon the court the scene became 'a street' without interruption to the action. It is not safe to push too far the theory of an alternation of 'inner' and 'outer' scenes; but there is sufficient evidence to show that in general there is such an alternation in the plays, namely a scene with properties succeeded by one without properties. Just as at present, the setting upon the inner stage was often prepared during the action upon the outer stage. We can assure ourselves that the wondrous forest of Arden, with its oaks and palms and olives, was not planted in the sight of Elizabethan spectators by hurrying 'supers,' but grew under their ministrations behind the curtains. Dr. Albright admits, of course, that the scenic setting was meagre; elaborately painted scenery was not introduced until after the Restoration; "the stage of Shakespeare. . . . was plain and simple, but fully equipped with all the apparatus necessary to bring out the best that was in his plays" (p. 148). We leave Dr. Albright's study well satisfied with the soundness of the general principle: "The deeper the scholar is grounded in the stage of to-day, the better he is qualified to study the stage of yesterday" (p. 162).

Of the literary quality of the work it is not possible to speak with such approval. The author is rather intent upon maintaining his thesis than solicitous for literary finish or even interest, and there is an unpleasant repetition of formulas, of conclusions from facts, nothing to relieve the strain of attention as one reads the book. With the general accuracy of the work there is no fault to find; but one might note one curious slip: "As Hamlet felt his end drawing near, he made his way to the throne and there died in the arms of his faithful friend, Laertes" (*sic*, p. 149). It might also be noted that the index is not

complete, and that in the bibliography there is no mention of Chambers' *Mediæval Stage*, to which the author frequently acknowledges his indebtedness. The valuable plates in the volume are especially well chosen and carefully explained.

The immense mass of contradictory criticism upon Shakespeare furnishes forth another volume only less interesting than this one, Professor Johnson's *Shakespeare and his Critics*. Here we have materials that could be gathered with difficulty only in certain libraries, tracing the progress of Shakespearean criticism, both esthetic and textual, from Meres and Johnson to Bradley and Furness. The earlier criticisms, being brief and infrequent, are generally given *in extenso*; but the sheaf is not full enough to satisfy the requirements of one who would have all contemporary references. Indeed, in this earlier part of the volume one feels some disappointment; for it is neither so full nor so careful as several books of no great cost that might be mentioned. In the later periods the criticism of Shakespeare becomes so voluminous that a library could not contain it,—and would contain much trash if it did. Here the compiler has exercised a wise judgment, selecting those criticisms that are of most significance, and giving such analysis of them as will enable the reader to find his way safely. There is no startling novelty in what Professor Johnson has collected; but there is a very great deal that is not merely curious but informing. And it is in dealing with the less known critics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that he is most successful; for example, what he has to say of Dryden seems inadequate in the space allotted to it as well as in the matter: one can find a clearer and more helpful study in several earlier publications, such as Professor Strunk's; but what is said of Rymer, Gildon, and John Dennis is quite worth while. In passing, we note what seems a curious misquotation,—unless it be intended to represent an actual misquotation,—in a phrase from some of Dryden's criticisms that I have not come upon: Dryden, he says, writes a fine appreciation of Shakespeare, but mistakenly speaks "as if here were an exceptional person taught to write above a mental pitch by some 'affable, familiar ghost that mighty [*sic*] gulls him with intelligence'" (p. 61). Again, commenting upon *As*

You Like It, III, iv, 15, "He hath bought a pair of cast lips of Diana," Professor Johnson is severe upon Theobald: "Theobald says 'cast' means 'cast off,' or second-hand. The word is so plainly the Latin form of 'chaste'—*castus*,—that it is inconceivable that a scholar like Theobald should fail to perceive it" (p. 100). And yet there are many who remain as obtuse as Theobald, among whom I note Rolfe and the editor of the new Hudson; presumably, these editors fancy that if Orlando bought the lips they were bought at second-hand, whether chaste or not. And finally, it is to be regretted that in a work presumably intended for the class-room the references are not fuller. There is no formal bibliography, and in a book of this kind perhaps none is needed; but the references in the text or in footnotes are sorely needed. As an illustration, let us refer once more to the passage on Dryden, where it is impossible to determine whether a quotation of great importance (p. 60) is taken from the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, or the *Defense of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, both of which are of considerable length; or in the very illuminating analysis of Maurice Morgann's criticism of Falstaff, what could be more discouraging to the student who would like to pursue the study somewhat beyond Mr. Johnson's book than the statement: "Mr. Morgann is not mentioned in the encyclopædias. . . . Some extension is given to the extract because his book is not easy to come at"? (p. 162).

Though thus deficient in critical apparatus, the book is a useful one. Professor Johnson's taste and judgment are generally quite sound enough to encourage the reader to trust him. And his style is often delightful, filled with humorous suggestion that relieves the tedium of the journey through so many pages of criticism that the world has, for the most part, quite forgotten.

Not all the scorn of Carlyle for "gigmanity" quite convinces us that he would not have been, as the satirist has said, proud to be seen walking down Piccadilly arm in arm with two dukes. And in the same manner, not all the contempt with which Americans affirm that every Englishman loves a lord can quite assure us that Americans themselves are not, for the most part, just as fond of titles and honors quite as empty; only, not being allowed titles of nobility, we manufacture countless brummagem

titles, martial and professional. This is not extraordinary, nor even harmful; it merely goes to show that we are as refreshingly inconsistent as the rest of mankind. But unless we recognize this pleasant weakness in ourselves, we shall be prone to sniff at the snobbishness of a little study of Mr. Samuel Tannenbaum: *Was Shakspeare a Gentleman?* At first we fortify ourselves by a paternoster derived from the Declaration of Independence and then recall certain noble sentiments about "true gentillesse" ascribed to the Wife of Bath, or found in Piers Plowman, and dismiss Mr. Tannenbaum's query as an impertinence to the memory of Jack Falstaff. But upon examination we find that Mr. Tannenbaum really has something to say, and we reflect that, after all, there was no great harm in Shakespeare's desire to parade a coat of arms. The point of the book is to show that Mr. Lee and other biographers of Shakespeare are wrong in conveying the impression that the College of Heralds did not grant him a coat of arms and the right to the title of "gentleman" in 1596, but that Shakespeare fraudulently assumed these dignities. The evidence presented by Mr. Tannenbaum, gathered from documents long well known, as well as from a fresh examination of the records of the College of Heraldry, is conclusive. No new document is produced; but one very effective point may be noted. Guillim's *Display of Heraldry* (London, 1724, p. 338) describes the Shakespeare arms, and says they were given by William Dethick, Garter King-at-Arms, to William Shakespeare. Guillim must have based his statement upon first-hand knowledge of the documents, since Rowe's *Life*, the only one then written, says nothing about the coat of arms. It is but a small point, but one is glad to have the facts set in the right light. One might remind Mr. Tannenbaum, however, that biographers of Shakespeare are not in a conspiracy to blacken his memory; they merely read into the scanty facts the best meaning they can get; and they are, of course, fallible, as is Mr. Tannenbaum when, on page eight he confounds Frankenstein with the monster produced by Frankenstein's ingenuity.

Of a value not yet to be safely estimated are the results of the researches now being conducted by Professor Charles Wallace, of the University of Nebraska. For several years Mr. Wallace

has been engaged in a painstaking search for documents concerning the Elizabethan drama, in various parts of Europe, and especially in the Public Record Office, London. When these researches are completed, he proposes to publish the results and his conclusions, with the documents substantiating them, in a work which will doubtless fill several volumes.

Though the most sensational of his discoveries have been announced from time to time in the newspapers and in periodicals, the only part of the work so far in a state anything like completeness is his conscientious history of *The Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars*. The work bears every evidence of a sincerity and capacity of which Americans may be justly proud. Whether we agree in all things with his conclusions or not, we cannot dispute the authority of the documents upon which they are based, which are often printed *in extenso* in the elaborate footnotes, and which have in many cases never been printed before. It is, to my mind, beyond question that Mr. Wallace establishes certain essential facts that have been heretofore in doubt or quite unknown. The most important points seem to me these: the Children of the Chapel were not mere occasional rivals of the professional players, as has been assumed, but were regularly trained for dramatic performances, and gave such performances during a considerable period. They were licensed to do this under royal authority, and were to a certain extent sustained by the sovereign. Their performances exerted a salutary influence upon the public stage. So much is written plain upon the documents unearthed by Mr. Wallace. But I cannot go so far as he does in claiming that this Blackfriars theatre amounted practically to a State theatre—he does not assert this in so many words, but such is the inference—heartily patronized by the sovereign and, indeed, actually established by Elizabeth with deliberate purpose. His evidence as to her attendance at the performances and as to the payments made in support of the child actors is insufficient; it is possible that he may produce something more satisfying. In his pardonable enthusiasm over what has already been discovered he seems to claim a little too much. For example, in a chapter seeking to make good the contention that Elizabeth was actuated by a

fixed purpose in establishing the Children, Mr. Wallace notes the number of Orders of the Privy Council against players and playhouses between 1597 and 1603, commonly understood as a manifestation of the increasing influence of Puritanism. "But," he says (p. 150), "the causes of the Queen's official attitude toward the theatres lay not in Puritanism but in her own purposes." Weighty evidence is called for to sustain this view; for most of us have rather firmly rooted opinions that Queen Bess was a very accomplished deceiver of the public, a most barefaced time-server. Mr. Wallace marshals a great array of evidence; but it is not enough to convince; and he does not allow sufficiently for the very suspicious circumstance that many of the Orders in Council appear to have been dead letters, which would seem to us to show that Elizabeth and her crafty advisers were content with having made a pretence of complying with the Puritan outcry.

The work is so full of valuable fact, and of suggestion for new investigations that may materially alter our notions of the Elizabethan stage, that one knows not where to stop. But we must content ourselves with noting the wide scope such a study may take, by referring to the very satisfactory explanation of the reference to the Children in the first Quarto of Hamlet, a reference which is omitted in the later Quartos. The omission is due to the fact, says Mr. Wallace (p. 183), that with the ascension of James the royal patronage of the Children as against the public players ceased: "The cause of grievance to the public theatres being thus removed, the continuance of Shakespeare's attack thereafter would have been pointless and absurd. Hence it was omitted from the 1604 edition . . . and was never printed until the 1623 folio, which aims to preserve to literature and history the plays of Shakespeare from their most authentic source."

It is safe to say that the results of Mr. Wallace's investigations are likely to be more important than any we have had for a generation. In many minor points the data he supplies will furnish corrections for biographers of Shakespeare. And the world already knows of two discoveries that have occasioned no little excitement. In the first place, certain estimable brewers

in London took pride not in the fine water at their disposal, as another famous firm does, but in the fact that their brewery stood upon the site of the Globe Theatre. Accordingly, preparations were made to mark the site with a tablet. Though, in the volume we have been considering, Mr. Wallace announced important documents concerning the Globe, the committee in charge of the celebration apparently took no heed, until, one week before the published date for the unveiling of the tablet, the *London Times* (October 2 and 4, 1909) printed an article by Mr. Wallace giving documents to prove his statement that the true site of the Globe was not where the tablet was to be, but on the other side of the street. Though there was much indignation, we have not seen any convincing refutation of Mr. Wallace's argument, much less of his records—and the tablet was duly placed where it was wanted. It will do no manner of harm in this position. Meanwhile, we shall leave Mr. Wallace and his friends in England to thresh out the truth.

Of greater interest to us is the substance of Mr. Wallace's article in the March number of *Harper's Magazine*. Though here, as in his volume, the author shows a disposition to claim too much, and in his haste falls into an actual error that he might easily have escaped, it is not too much to say that his publication brings one, somehow, closer to the real Shakespeare than anything yet published. It is not the new signature of Shakespeare that he has there given us, interesting as that is, it is the glimpse we get of Shakespeare in intimate private life that is worth whole libraries of surmise about the Dark Lady of the Sonnets. The actual facts revealed are slight enough; but they are yet something—to know that Shakespeare was actually a lodger with a respectable family in a quarter of the town where roisterers were not found, that he continued to live in the same place at least for several years, and that he was sufficiently human and lovable to appear as the friend of all parties in a family quarrel,—this is well worth the labor of finding the record among the tons of documents handled by Mr. Wallace. Yet fancy would have it more, and fancy proceeds to build upon this slight foundation, and "give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." In spite of the temptation to discover in Shake-

speare's apparent intimacy with this burgher family of French provenance some influence upon his work, or even some hint of his religious leanings, one must remember that there is really no warrant for such imaginings. At most, I should say the facts show only that Shakespeare was not spoiled by his prosperity, that he continued to live with simple folk of about his own social standing, in spite of his probable English predilection for lords. But did not Shakespeare write the *Merry Wives* while he was domiciled with Christopher Mountjoy, in Silver Street? And is not that farce, from one point of view, a wholesome counter-satire upon the conventional satirical presentation of "citizens' wives," showing the would-be court gallant made a laughing stock by Mistress Page and Mistress Ford? From his own acquaintance Shakespeare found material to laugh at a silly and stale stage convention. But we must cry, holla, lest we fall into Mr. Wallace's error, identifying this Mountjoy and his family with other folk who are not of their kin.

We shall look forward with the keenest interest to the publication of other finds announced by Mr. Wallace, rejoicing in the patient skill with which he is pursuing his task. Meanwhile, "angels and ministers of grace defend us" from more books of the class we shall take up next.

Mr. Frank Harris, not content with reasonable success in downright fiction, essays, in *The Man Shakespeare*, to construct a figure, which he would have to be Shakespeare, out of sundry personages in the plays who discover, in his belief, the true thought, character, and morals of the author. Frankly, one is haunted by a certain melody in reading this book; it is not such an one as 'stole o'er the senses' of the Duke in *Twelfth Night*; it is accompanied by words that seem to convey some hint of what Mr. Harris's idea of Shakespeare might be:

"O, I am a cook, and a Captain bold,
And the mate of the Nancy brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the Captain's gig."

In effect, he contrives to convince himself that the real Shakespeare was a sort of composite of Hamlet, Jaques, Macbeth,

Romeo, and Posthumus, "and plenty more beside." How absolutely he is obsessed by the idea he has evolved may appear from this sentence on page 4 (it might be matched almost at random in the volume): "Shakespeare's purpose is surely the same as Montaigne's, to reveal himself to us, and it would be hasty to decide that his skill is inferior." There is no reasoning with one so far gone as this; not "if reasons were as plentiful as blackberries" would I give you a reason. Of course, the Sonnets furnish materials in which Mr. Harris fairly revels; and Mary Fitton is credited not only with all the iniquities of the Dark Lady, but with all that looks off-color in other heroines of dark complexion, and with all that might look off-color in Shakespeare's life, if we knew all about it. Moreover, from a discovery of certain tell-tale lines in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*,—at least Mr. Harris italicizes them for us,—we find that Mary Fitton must have begun her amorous adventures before she was fairly out of pinafores.

"Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,—
For such is a friend now,"

exclaims Valentine to the false Proteus. Whereupon: "The first lines I have italicised are too plain to be misread; when they were written Shakespeare had just been cheated by his friend" (p. 204). One might remark that, accepting, as Mr. Harris does (p. 127), the early date of the play in which these lines occur, William Herbert, the supposedly false friend, was possibly twelve years of age! Hardly Byron in his most theatric moments could have desired a reputation of more precocious depravity than this "false friend" of Shakespeare's,—

"Mature in *vileness* from his tender years."

Of course, the fact that certain themes in the Sonnets are closely akin to passages in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is nothing new; but this has nothing whatever to do with William Herbert.

It would be easy, were the thing worth the trouble, to discover absurdities equally as gross on page after page of Mr. Harris's volume; but we find this instance enough to indicate the general character of his scholarship. The book is one of the many

monuments of misdirected ingenuity. And the only pity is that it will doubtless do some share of harm through falling into the hands of uncritical readers. The idea that certain characters in the plays are treated more subjectively than others is not at all a new one, and not at all to be questioned; but we beg leave to decline to accept a *reductio ad absurdum*. And we resent an attempt to depict Shakespeare as a selfish voluptuary upon any such evidence. He may have been very much of a libertine, or he may have been a Puritan; no man knows, for the record is blank. And the revulsion of feeling after perusing such a book as Mr. Harris's almost carries us to the extreme position assumed by Browning in *At The Mermaid*.

PIERCE BUTLER.

Tulane University.